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# USDA Inside USDA Information

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HEAR YE...

Starting the NEW year, "Inside..." brings you: Final results of the 1978 Yearbook saga, changes and dreams for "A Better Way," notes about visitors and letter exchanges, and bits and pieces of info from here and there....

\* \* \*

For awhile, it looked like the pits for sure. We're talking about developments regarding the 1978 Yearbook of Agriculture.

FROM THE PITS  
TO A HIT?

As "Inside..." has reported over the weeks, cover problems were solved only to be surpassed by text and illustration difficulties. All these quality failures were to be rated by GPO's new quality measurement standards too...standards to be "read" by machine, not by people.

One option was to cancel the whole job, find enough paper to do it over completely, and wait. That wait would have been until March 1, at the earliest.

To make a long story short, after hours of fretting by GPA printing liaison Warren Bell, the book became acceptable after one or two inside signatures were reprinted to improve the quality. New release date now, sometime next week. Happy New Year!

\* \* \*

BETTERING  
"A BETTER WAY"

We won't say it's the oldest, but undoubtedly there are few TV shows to match "A Better Way." For 17 years, including the same show by another name (Across the Fence), it's been running continually nationwide, as a public service feature and produced for USDA by GPA.

Folks in the D.C. area see it at the ungodly hour of 7:30 a.m., each Saturday. More than 80 TV stations, in 34 states, run it at 6 a.m. (gulp), 8 a.m., in afternoon and evening spots on various days during the week.

Audience is the general public, urban and rural, young and old. We know that kids and older folks are among the leading viewers...and they add up to thousands.

GPA and agency folks here are making a concerted effort to improve "A Better Way," hoping to create a steady consistency

in the way each show is packaged. An objective is to get better viewing times eventually too.

Some changes already have been made...we'll report them in future issues of "Inside..." Meanwhile, if you see the show and have ideas, shoot them to Larry Quinn or Don Elder of GPA.

\* \* \*

The holidays brought a flurry of visitors...Jerry Webb, Univ. of Delaware, attended the local ACE Christmas bash to plug attendance at the national ACE meeting to be held at his university next summer, July 8-11...Mary Ann Wamsley, former extension info specialist now with EPA...Ken Goodrich, APHIS, who's located in Mexico City to handle screwworm information work there...and there seemed to be old home week going on almost everyday in the halls.

\* \* \*

Virginia Tatum Mewis retires Jan. 12 after 31 years. She's been asst. to Dir. of Inf, APHIS, started at radio station WPTF in her home town of Raleigh, N.C. First USDA job was as radio specialist for AAA, then back to commercial radio, a weekly half hour on CBS network, "Columbia Country Journal of the Air."

Later, Virginia returned to USDA's Bureau of Animal Industry. Was information support to F.J. (Pancho) Mulhern when he fought foot and mouth disease in Mexico...also during the vesicular exanthema eradication program. In recent years, still of Mulhern's team, she fought the beasties of our food supply from within APHIS.

Many of you will remember her husband, the late B.H. Mewis of ARS and Centennial of Agriculture days. Virginia has two ambitions in retirement: (1) sleep until noon every day (you could call that a retiring avocation), and (2) continue writing. She's got all kinds of offers and plans.

\* \* \*

From Florida's university comes word that Milt Morris has just returned from 3 weeks in Panama where he worked with AID on the communication aspects of a loan proposal to support a research program.

Milt points out that this is a first for getting communication in on the beginning of research there...that the program is aimed at 30,000 small farmers.

He also reports that L. Van Crowder from Cornell represents Florida information in Bolivia...went with his family to LaPaz in September. Milt will visit there in February. (from Fla.?) (in Feb.?)

\* \* \*

BUZZ OFF, BUD

Just so you'll know, here are a couple of buzz words you'll no doubt hear now and then. "Appropriate Technology" supposedly refers to information that small farmers can use. "SITE Specificity" relates to the idea that a lot of recommendations put out should require complete packaging.

No, we didn't get those from our bureaucracy! Honest!

\* \* \*

GET SMART...

Another rumble hereabouts has to do with a symposium Jan. 30, from 9-4 in Jefferson Aud. of the USDA South Bldg. Sponsored by the Soil Conservation Society of America and the National Association of Conservation Districts, it's called "Get S.M.A.R.T. on Coal."

Appropriately, information contact is Lee Shields, SCS. S.M.A.R.T. stands for Surface Mining and Reclamation Teamwork.

\* \* \*

TERRY'S BACK...

Terence L. Day, Univ. of Washington, writes that he made it back from Africa where he spent the last few months doing inf. work for two international livestock centers--Kenya and Ethiopia.

Terry says he dropped 30 pounds on the trip--that he should go back for a couple of months and lose 20 more.

\* \* \*

MORE DOUBLE-DASHES...

Terry wrote mainly to call our attention to a couple of double-dashed mailing problems. The Spokane Daily Chronicle found grist for an editorial when two staff members received four copies of a news release...two in English and two in Spanish on the same subject, recruitment of seasonal employees. That didn't bother the folks too much because no one in the office could read Spanish. But they cussed.

Then came a press release on advance rates by grade for all types of dark tobacco. End statement in the editorial was: Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus, Latin for "the mountains are in labor, and a ridiculous mouse will be brought forth."

Yes...both stories came from USDA--one from a regional agency office that shall remain nameless.

\* \* \*

FLYING HIGH...

How about this...a flyer on a new research project. Leon McGraw, Auburn Univ., reports that the project will be at the Lower Coastal Plain Substation at Camden and has to do with work being started to measure beef production efficiency. There's lots of interest among Alabamans in that, Leon says, and the project is new.



The flyer, along with a press release, went to newspapers and magazines across the state and practically all of them used the story.

Leon feels they had enough success with this treatment that they might repeat it again on selected new projects in the future, but not on all.

\* \* \*

If you aren't getting those blue sheets, you're missing something. We're referring to the news features GPA issues now through Russ Forte, Shirley Wagener, and numerous agency writers.

BLUE IS NEW

News people from everywhere, almost, are eating them up...often verbatim. Russ says he has a couple hundred "subscribers," and more people are asking for them daily. He's trying to get length down to 200-300 words and is using pictures often.

\* \* \*

AVAILABLE...

Bill Hamilton, FS, sends us word of Harley Luther Sachs, 113 W. Houghton, Houghton, Mich. 49931, who is available. Harley has free lanced, taught at Mich. Tech. Univ., Southern Ill., Purdue Univ., and the Univ. of Stockholm. Write him above.

\* \* \*

FOCUS ON DESIGN...

Word from GPO says beginning Feb. 12, it will host the fifth design focus seminar series on federal design and contemporary graphics. GPO and the National Endowment for the Arts co-sponsor the show...it provides an annual platform for the discussion of theory and practice in both commercial and federal sectors.

This one is limited to the federal artist/designer, grades 5 through 12, who must produce visual images.

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Nominations may be made through agency training or personnel offices. A completed Civil Service Optional Training Form 37 or a letter of request should be sent to the Sup of Typography and Design, Room C846, U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 732 N. Capitol St., NW, Washington, DC 20401, no later than Feb. 7.

\* \* \*

MORE THAN FOOTBALL

We assume you caught the Forest Service float if you watched the Rose Parade Jan. 1. It depicted the Paul Bunyan Olympics with Woodsy Owl and Smokey Bear in a birling contest with other occupants sawing and chopping. Still another parade feature was a horse and mule pack train marshalled by a forest supervisor.